

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 4-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Manabe JP '501. Applicant traverses this rejection because the examiner has not fairly considered the test results described in the applicant's specification, together with the Declaration of Atsushi Tanno, which was previously submitted. Moreover, Manabe fails to disclose or suggest that the difference between the average rim thickness of adjacent rim sections is between 0.5 mm and 5 mm.

As disclosed in Section 8 of the Declaration, and paragraph [0028] of the specification, Prior Art Wheel 1 was evaluated by mounting tires having a tire pressure of 200 kPa onto a car fitted with Prior Art Wheels 1. Then, five test drivers completed a test course in the passenger car, noting the road noise produced using the Prior Art Wheels. The level of road noise generated by Prior Art Wheels 1 was designated to be 3 points out of a possible 5 points.

Then, as noted in Section 9 of the Declaration, the passenger vehicle was refit with a new set of wheels (i.e., Prior Art Wheel 2, Present Invention Wheel 1, Present Invention Wheel 2, Present Invention Wheel 3, or Present Invention Wheel 4) and the five drivers repeated their testing until all drivers had tested all wheels. The road noise produced by each wheel was evaluated relative to the road noise produced by Prior Art Wheel 1, and was scored on a 5 point scale with scores greater than 3 indicating that the test wheel produced less road noise than Prior Art Wheel 1, and scores lower than 3 indicating that the tested wheel produced more road noise than Prior Art Wheel 1. The scores were scaled as

indicated in Sections 10-14 of the Declaration. Accordingly, it is clear that all wheels shown in Table 1, including Prior Art Wheel 1, were evaluated in a similar manner.

The examiner also asserts that the results shown in Table 1 do not qualify as being unexpected because the scores for Present Invention Wheels 1-4 are not much higher than the score for Prior Art Wheel 1. However, the examiner has not acknowledged that Present Invention Wheels 1-4 weigh only 75 to 80 % of Prior Art Wheel 1. Typically, a lighter weight wheel produces more road noise, as shown in the difference between Prior Art Wheel 1 and Prior Art Wheel 2. However, Table 1 shows that Present Invention Wheels 1-4, which weigh approximately the same as Prior Art Wheel 2, show a marked improvement in road noise over Prior Art Wheel 2. Present Invention Wheels 1-4 also show an improvement in road noise over Prior Art Wheel 1, even though Present Invention Wheels 1-4 weigh significantly less than Prior Art Wheel 1.

More specifically, the road noise produced by Prior Art Wheels 1 and 2 and Present Invention Wheels 1-4 is shown below.

Prior Art Wheel 1:	69.1 dB
Prior Art Wheel 2:	69.5 dB
Present Invention Wheel 1:	69.0 dB
Present Invention Wheel 2:	68.9 dB
Present Invention Wheel 3:	68.6 dB
Present Invention Wheel 4:	68.6 dB


As can be seen in the table above, the intensity of the road noise produced by Prior Art Wheels 1 and 2 is significantly larger than the intensity of the road noise produced by Present Invention Wheels 1-4. Particularly, it can be seen that the road noise decreases by nearly 1 full decibel from Prior Art Wheel 2 to Present Invention Wheels 3 and 4.

Moreover, Manabe does not disclose or suggest that the rim body of wheel is divided into three equal sections, and that the difference between the average rim thickness of each pair of adjacent equal sections is 0.5 mm to 5 mm, as recited in claim 1. As stated by the examiner, Manabe fails to disclose the relationship of rim thicknesses of adjacent equal sections. Accordingly, because rim thickness is not disclosed, it follows that differences in average rim thickness of adjacent sections are also not disclosed. Thus, for the above reasons, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 4-6.

For the foregoing reasons, applicant believes that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicant's attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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